



August 18, 2017

To: The Committee on Public Health, Safety and Welfare

Re: Strong Support for Bill 70, Smoke-free cars when a minor is present

Hrg: August 22, 2017

By: Valerie Chang, JD, Executive Director  
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I thank you for this opportunity in **STRONG SUPPORT of Bill 70**, Relating to the Traffic Code which allows all of the minors in Hawaii to breathe clean air in all vehicles, WITHOUT being subjected to fumigation via tobacco products. Smoking is currently NOT prohibited in cars where people under the age of 18 are present. Our organization strongly supports prohibiting the use of tobacco, including Electronic Smoking Devices (ESDs) in all vehicles in which people under the age of 18 are present, similar to laws enacted in other states.

My name is Valerie Chang. I am Executive Director of the Hawaii COPD Coalition. Our organization provides services and support to Hawaii's people affected by Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease, more commonly known as emphysema and chronic bronchitis. COPD is now the third leading cause of death in the US and second leading cause of disability. Over 46,015 people in Hawaii have already been diagnosed with COPD and it is estimated that at least 46,015 more people may suffer from COPD but remain undiagnosed. Many of these COPD patients were seduced by nicotine and tobacco when they were very young and unable to quit the addiction for decades, causing irreparable harm. There are over \$55 million in COPD hospital charges in Hawaii each year.

We need to protect our children from secondhand smoke. Secondhand smoke in a car can be up to 10 times more toxic than what the EPA considers hazardous air quality, even when a window is down. Children's bodies are still developing, and exposure to the poisons in secondhand smoke puts them at risk of severe respiratory diseases and can hinder the growth of their lungs. Secondhand smoke is a known cause of low birth weight, Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS), asthma, bronchitis, pneumonia, middle ear infection, and other diseases.

Dr. Elizabeth Tam of the John A Burns School of Medicine's Hlclass studies on the effects of volcanic emissions on Big Island school children has spoken time and again about the exposure to second-hand smoke being the single major risk for children developing asthma, even more than exposure to volcanic emissions. She has presented this information at many conferences and events.

Just as restrictions on drivers' behaviors are required for public health and safety, protecting children from secondhand smoke and vapor from electronic smoking devices (ESDs) in vehicles is also necessary. ESDs contain harmful ingredients such as nicotine and cancer-causing chemicals that are inhaled by those exposed to e-cigarette vapor. In the 2015 Legislative session, the Legislature passed HB 940 which now includes ESDs in the statewide smoke-free air law.

Hawai'i has been a leader, protecting the public and its visitors from the dangers of secondhand smoke, and now, the Honolulu City Council has the opportunity to protect its children and young people from the harmful

impacts of smoking in a vehicle. Across the nation, seven states have passed laws to prohibit smoking when children and young people are present. This year, 12 additional states are considering similar legislation. We hope that Hawai'i can continue being an example for other states in the nation in promoting clean, smoke-free, and healthy environments for our residents and families by passing Bill 70, joining the county of Hawaii and county of Kauai in protecting the lungs and health of our keiki.